



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of the Connecticut AFL-CIO before the Labor and Public Employees Committee

February 17, 2015

Senator Winfield, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

We submit this testimony on behalf of the 900 affiliated local unions who represent 200,000 working men and women from every city and town in our great state in opposition to:

Proposed S.B. No. 81 An Act Concerning Journeyman and Apprentices

An apprentice in construction trades is an entry level employee. Most construction trade affiliates of the Connecticut AFL-CIO have multi-year apprenticeships in order for the apprentice to hone their skills. Upon completion of testing and required on the job training, these apprentices become journey-persons. Regardless of the vocation one chooses, apprenticeship is more than just "learning the craft". Apprenticeship teaches someone how to go about working in a safe manner and not harming themselves or others in the process.

Learning a skill from a journey-person the proper and professional manner of their craft is to be learned at the side of the journey-person, not off to the side. Proponents of this bill claim there is a large demand for a person to become an apprentice. The proponents are excluding there is also an availability of journey-persons who are unemployed seeking the same opportunity. The difference is cost. A journey-persons qualification is the equivalent to having a college degree. An apprentice is working towards getting that degree but is no expert until requirements have been met. Therefore they are unqualified to be by themselves producing work or have enough experience to keep them working in a safe manner.

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We oppose this bill, every year this bill or one very similar is proposed under the guise of increasing employment opportunities for apprentices. The reality is this bill is dangerous for apprentices. Imagine a young 20 year old electrical apprentice working on a job and vying for the attention of his journeymen but having to compete with four others for his attention? Now imagine an apprentice pipe fitter working on a job involving natural gas. Wouldn't you want these trainees to have undivided attention?

The increased employment promise would end up costing some family the life of a young apprentice. Protect the future workforce by abandoning this false promise.

We thank the committee for holding this hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori Pelletier

Executive Secretary Treasurer, Connecticut AFL-CIO

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